



# NEWSLETTER

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY**



## 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GI BILL®

June 22<sup>nd</sup> marks the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the GI Bill®, and the VA wants all veterans, service members, and families from all generations – to share their story of how the GI Bill® has made a difference in their lives.

Millions of veterans and families have benefited from the GI Bill®, which made low-interest mortgages available, granted stipends covering tuition and expenses for veterans attending college or trade schools and provided unemployment pay.

Because the GI Bill® has impacted the lives of millions of veterans, the VA would like states and counties to assist in having veterans share their GI Bill® Story.

Here's how veterans can record a video using their cell phone and answer the following questions:

- What's your name?
- How did you utilize the GI Bill®?
- How has it impacted your life?

The video can be posted at the following link: <https://fs9.formsite.com/gibill75th/fizrlbbyvo/index.html>.

Additional GI Bill® information can be found at: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/75th-anniversary.asp>.

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



**GI Bill 75th Anniversary**

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# VABHHCS 2019 VETERANS' CREATIVE ARTS SHOW

The VA Black Hills Health Care System invites the public to view the artwork submitted for this year's creative arts competition. Each show features the extraordinary talents of veterans competing in several categories at this annual event. Select winners at the local level are invited to compete at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

The public is invited to view the entries at two shows on March 6, 2019 in Building 145, Classroom 108 from 1:00pm to 4:00pm at the Fort Meade VA, and on March 13, 2019 in the Domiciliary Auditorium from 1:00pm to 4:00pm at the Hot Springs VA.

The competition includes 51 categories in the visual arts division that range from oil painting, to leatherwork to paint-by-number kits. In addition, there are 100 categories in the performing arts division, including all aspects of music, dance, drama, and creative writing. A panel of local artists will judge entries based on creativity, skill, originality, and overall presentation.

The purpose of the National Veterans Creative Arts competition is to recognize veterans for their creative and artistic ability and to demonstrate the therapeutic benefits of the arts. Creative art therapy is recognized by Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities as one form of rehabilitative treatment to help veterans recover from and cope with physical and emotional disabilities.

## BULLERMAN COMPLETES 20 YEARS WITH SDNG

March was Heather Bullerman's final Guard Drill. On April 2 she will have completed a 20-year career with the 114th Fighter Wing Unit of the South Dakota Air National Guard.

"I had the pleasure of serving with one of the best fighter units in the world," said Heather Bullerman. "I proudly participated in three overseas deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. It wasn't always easy, but with hard work, integrity and supportive leadership, it was an amazing career. Thank you to everyone who helped me reach this milestone."

Join SDDVA in thanking Bullerman for her 20 outstanding years with the Guard. Although retiring from the Guard, Bullerman will continue her leadership role of SDDVA's Claims Office in Sioux Falls.



# VA'S CENTER FOR WOMEN VETERANS KICKS OFF WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that it will celebrate the start of Women's History Month in March with a kickoff event on March 6, from 2-4 p.m. at the [Women in Military Service for America \(WIMSA\) Memorial](#) in Arlington, Virginia.

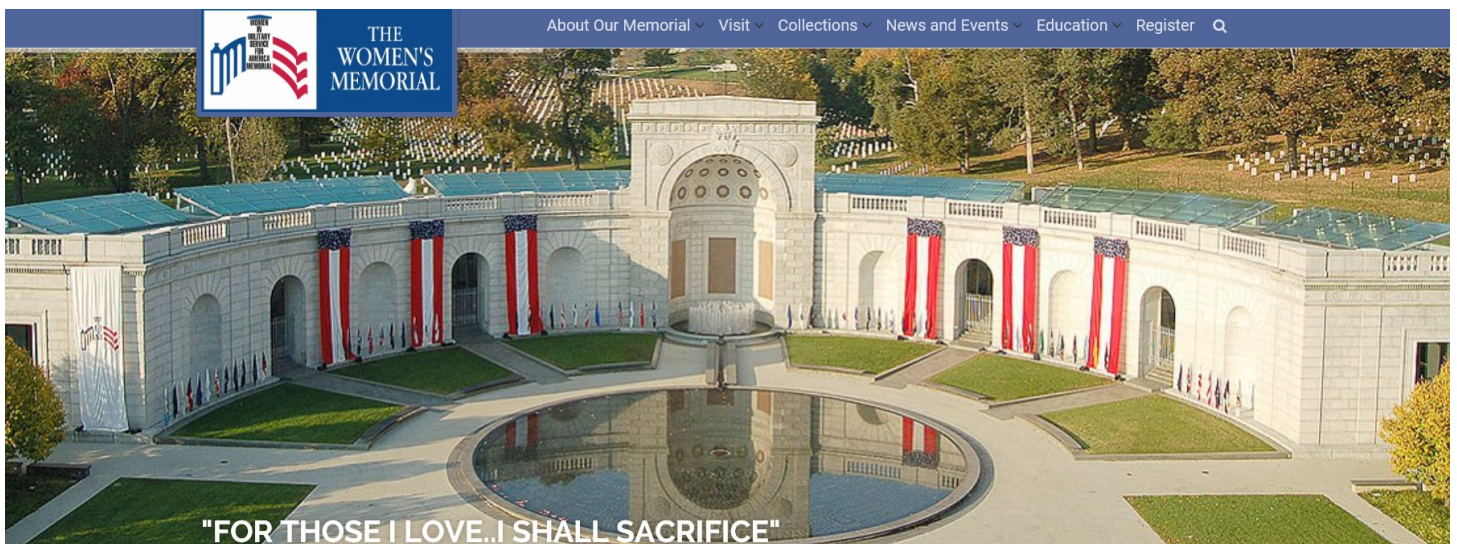
Sponsored by the VA's Center for Women's Veterans, the event will feature 15 women veterans representing all branches of military service in a 2019 campaign titled "Trailblazers: Women Breaking Barriers," celebrating the contributions of women veterans in honor of Women's History Month and continuing through the rest of the year.

"Women veterans are one of the fastest growing demographics within the VA, and will represent nearly 20 percent of the U.S. veteran population by 2045," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "The VA is proud to serve all our nation's veterans, and the Center for Women Veterans does a great job reminding all Americans of the strong service and sacrifice of women veterans through these innovative campaigns."

The campaign will provide a platform for the featured women to share stories about their military service and how their unique experiences in uniform led to their continued roles as leaders and advocates in their communities.

Explore WIMSA's exhibits and learn more about women's service in the military by visiting [www.womensmemorial.org](http://www.womensmemorial.org). For more information about the Center for Women Veterans and the Trailblazers Initiative, visit [www.va.gov/womenvet](http://www.va.gov/womenvet) or contact Alohalani Bullock-Jones at [00w@va.gov](mailto:00w@va.gov).

The Trailblazers campaign is sponsored in part by Veteran Canteen Services, whose mission includes emphasizing the importance of service to veterans and supporting the VA's overall mission. For more information about VCS, visit [www.vacanteen.va.gov](http://www.vacanteen.va.gov) or [www.shopvcs.com](http://www.shopvcs.com).





# **PRESIDENT SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER TO END VETERAN SUICIDES**

President Donald J. Trump signed an executive order titled “National Initiative to Empower Veterans and End Veterans Suicide,” which focuses on improving the quality of life for America’s Veterans and ending the tragedy of veteran suicide.

“As the largest integrated health care provider in the nation and a leader in developing innovative mental health and suicide prevention strategies, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is uniquely positioned to co-chair this effort with the White House,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Veterans suicide is a national public health issue that affects communities everywhere, and this executive order is a national call to action.”

The executive order mandates the establishment of the Veteran Wellness, Empowerment and Suicide Prevention Task Force. The task force will include the Secretaries of Defense, Health and Human Services, Energy, Homeland Security, Labor, Education and Housing and Urban Development, as well as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Within 365 days of the date of the order and working with a variety of representatives from across both the public and private sectors, the task force shall:

- Develop a comprehensive national public health roadmap outlining the specific strategies needed to lower effectively the rate of veteran suicide, with a focus on community engagement,
- Design and propose to Congress a program for making grants to local communities, which will increase their ability to collaborate with each other, integrate service delivery and coordinate resources to veterans, and
- Develop a national research strategy to improve the coordination, monitoring, benchmarking and execution of research in the field of veteran suicide prevention.

“We are committed to saving veteran lives, but just as there is no single cause of suicide, no single organization can end veteran suicide alone,” Wilkie said. “We must work side by side with our partners at all levels of government — and in the private sector — to provide our veterans with the mental health and suicide prevention services they need. This executive order advances the public health approach to suicide prevention further by identifying key integrations and connections across the federal government and communities that can be used to save veterans’ lives.”

Learn more about VA’s suicide prevention resources and programs at [www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention).

Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know a veteran in crisis, can call the Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Call 800-273-8255 and press 1, send a text message to 838255 or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat). Visit [www.reportingonsuicide.org](http://www.reportingonsuicide.org) for important guidance on how to communicate about suicide.

# GOVERNOR NOEM SEEKS NOMINATIONS FOR AG AMBASSADOR AWARD

Governor Kristi Noem is seeking nominations for the 2019 South Dakota Governor's Ag Ambassador Award.

Nominees should be individuals, or organizations, who have continually worked to promote agriculture in South

Dakota while demonstrating servant leadership, hard work, honesty, humility, and respect for others.

**Key achievements of the Ag Ambassador:**

- Provides visionary leadership to South Dakota's agricultural industry
- Champions growth and prosperity of the state's number one industry
- Advocates for agriculture and the responsible stewardship of livestock and land
- Highlights the significance of South Dakota agriculture to the global food system
- Influences decision makers to develop and implement sound agricultural policies

Nominations are due to the South Dakota Department of Agriculture by May 17, 2019. The form can be found at [sdda.sd.gov](http://sdda.sd.gov) under the "Happening Now" section by clicking "2019 Governor's Ag Ambassador Nominations."

The award will be presented during the annual Governor's Agricultural Summit in Sioux Falls on July 10 and 11.



## 2019 South Dakota Governor's Ag Ambassador Award

# SDDVA'S SMITH RECOGNIZED

SDDVA Secretary Greg Whitlock recognized Jeri Smith this week for her outstanding commitment to veterans. Secretary Whitlock shared a message he had received from the SDNG's Director for Service Member and Family Support commending Jeri for her outreach efforts in working with veterans on their bonus.

Michael Jordan once said, "Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it."

Whitlock thanked Jeri for going the extra mile in assisting veterans in obtaining their bonus. He said, "the high road to service is traveled with integrity, compassion and understanding...you've demonstrated how much we care by working around the wall!"





# STARTING OR GROWING A VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESS

Sign up for Boots to Business Reboot, an entrepreneurship training program for veterans and their spouses.

## OWNING A VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS

Veterans have the character, discipline and skills needed to succeed as small business owners and entrepreneurs. Wondering what it takes and how you can prepare? Enroll in Boots to Business Reboot.

## ABOUT BOOTS TO BUSINESS REBOOT

Boots to Business Reboot is an entrepreneurial education and training program offered by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The course provides an overview of entrepreneurship and applicable business ownership fundamentals. Veterans of all eras, Active Duty Service members (including National Guard and Reserve), and spouses are eligible to participate.

During Reboot, participants are introduced to the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to launch a business, including steps for developing business concepts, how to develop a business plan, and information on SBA resources available to help. The program is facilitated by subject matter experts from the SBA and their extensive network of skilled business advisors.

Participants that complete an in-person B2B Reboot course can elect to further their study through one of many B2B online courses, offered at no cost to Service members, Veterans and military spouses. If you've already attended an in-person B2B course, visit <https://sbavets.force.com/> to sign up for one of the online B2B follow-on courses.

**Saturday, April 13, 2019**

8:30 AM - 4:30 PM CST

Zeal Center of Entrepreneurship

2329 N. Career Ave.

Sioux Falls, SD 57107

### For more information contact:

Dave Puls

David.Puls@sba.gov

605-330-4243 x 13

### To join the B2B community:

<https://sbavets.force.com/s/login/SelfRegister>

### To register for a Reboot class:

<https://sbavets.force.com/>



The Boots to Business program is provided through the coordinated efforts of the SBA and its valued partner network. All SBA services are extended to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis. Reasonable arrangements will be made if requested at least two weeks in advance.

LEARN MORE AT  
[WWW.SBA.GOV/BOOTSTOBUSINESSREBOOT](http://WWW.SBA.GOV/BOOTSTOBUSINESSREBOOT)

AND FOLLOW US AT  
[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/BOOTS2BUSINESS](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/BOOTS2BUSINESS)

AND ON  
[TWITTER.COM/BOOTS2BUSINESS](http://TWITTER.COM/BOOTS2BUSINESS)





# Welcome Home Vietnam & Vietnam Era Veterans

Join us for an  
honoring reception  
**March 29, 2019**

**4:00-6:00 p.m.**

**Sioux Falls VA Medical Center  
2501 W. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street**

Refreshments, music, and brief program with special  
commemorative pins at 4:00 p.m.

Learn more about what VA benefits are available to you!

# UPCOMING EVENTS

Mar 8—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—VFW Post 1273 (420 Main Street—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)  
Mar 12—VABHHCS Whole Health Program—Ft Meade—Building 145—Room 239—1:00 pm—3:00 pm (MT)  
Mar 13—VABHHCS Art Show—Hot Springs Domiciliary Auditorium—1:00 to 4:00 pm (MT)  
Mar 20—South Dakota Veterans Council meeting—PVA Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)  
Mar 26—VABHHCS Whole Health Program—Hot Springs Building 12—Room A002—10:00 am—12:00 pm (MT)  
Mar 29—Vietnam Veterans Open House—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls—1:00—3:00 pm (CT)  
Mar 29—Vietnam/Vietnam Era Veterans Reception—SFVAHCS Front Foyer—4:00 pm—6:00 pm (CT)  
Mar 30—Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day in South Dakota  
Apr 6—State MOPH Convention—Rapid City DAV (101 E. Madison Street) - 1:00 pm (MT)  
Apr 13—Boots to Business Reboot—Zeal Center of Entrepreneurship (2328 N. Career Ave.) - Sioux Falls—8:30 am—4:30 pm (CT)  
Apr 19—State Offices Closed  
Apr 22—State Offices Closed  
May 7—SDDVA Mini Conference—TREA (1981 Centre Street)—Rapid City—10:00 am—3:00 pm (MT)  
May 8—SDDVA Mini Conference—Post 8 American Legion (520 S. Pierre Street)—Pierre—10:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)  
May 9—SDDVA Mini Conference—VFW (3601 S. Minnesota Avenue)—Sioux Falls—10:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)  
May 14—Bill Casper's Annual WW II Luncheon—TREA—Rapid City  
May 17—Veterans Honor Concert—State Veterans Home—Hot Springs—2:00 pm (MT)  
May 17-19—DAV Convention—Hilton Garden Inn (5300 S. Grand Circle) —Sioux Falls  
May 27—MJFSVH Memorial Day Car Show—Hot Springs—2:00 pm (MT)  
Jun 13-16—VFW State Convention—Dakota State University—Madison  
July 20-24—National VFW Convention—Orlando, FL  
Aug 26-29—SDDVA Benefit School



Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer

South Dakota Department of the Military <http://military.sd.gov>

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>

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